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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Vladimir Putin of
Russia (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Notetakers: Jenna Galyean, Chris MacPherson,
Chico Negrón

Interpreter: Peter Afanasenko

DATE, TIME: March 15, 2004, 7:30 - 7:38 a.m., EST
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Yes, the day after a great victory. (U)

President Putin: Thank you very much. (U)

The President: I know you are glad to get the election over with, but obviously the people of Russia appreciate your leadership. Now that the elections are over, it gives us a great chance to continue to work together on our bilateral relationship. I know you've arranged your cabinet in a different way, but I've told my people to work with their counterparts. You will continue leading your country, strengthening your institutions of democracy, and I'm calling to congratulate you. The world watched this election very carefully; people are interested in what goes on. This is an opportunity to gain the confidence of the world and to display confidence in your institutions. I know you well, and this is a quick congratulatory call and to wish your family all the best. (U)

President Putin: First of all, George, thank you for the call. It was very important for me to talk to you today. This reaffirms the level of relations established between our countries and ourselves. I would like to stress as President of the Russian Federation, I will give special attention to the relations between our two countries. This is naturally one of my

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priorities for the second term of my presidency and our advance towards the civilized and western countries is a strategic choice for my country. The Government of Russia takes the same position. On the cabinet, all people are experienced and mature and they all understand the great importance of our relationship and are prepared for cooperation. We also follow closely the Presidential campaign in the United States. You know that I am fully aware of the nuances in this campaign. My elections are over, and we are not going to interfere, but you must be aware that at any time, in any form, or if you need us to send any signals, we are ready to help. (S)

The President: Thank you, Vlad, thank you. (U)

President Putin: And I am telling you all that not only because of our good personal relations but also from a pragmatic approach to have good relations with someone you know rather than someone new. I am happy to hear from you and am aware that you will visit Normandy on the 60th anniversary of landing on the 6th of June. If I do not see you there, I hope to see you at the G-8 meeting in Georgia. (S)

The President: I definitely hope to see you at maybe both places. (U)

President Putin: But you know the attitude people have in St. Petersburg. They are very happy to meet you. (U)

The President: That would be great. Plus, I need some hints and advice on how to win an election. (S)

President Putin: I believe, knowing your nature and character, you don't need advice, but when you come here we can talk that over. (S)

The President: Listen, the people of Russia care for you and that is a great testimony for your leadership. (S)

President Putin: Thank you George, thank you for the kind words and thank you and your family. (U)

The President: All the best. Congratulations again. (U)

-- End of Conversation --